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greater than a radius of a corresponding one of said at least two optical fibres, said semi-circular portion of said slot having a projecting arm and a notch capable of imparting elasticity to said arm. --

-- 21. Securing device according to claim 19, wherein said slide is provided with a pin which is used for centering said spring, and each of said slide, said cover and said supporting element is made from a transparent material. --

REMARKS

The Preliminary Amendment adds headings and subheadings in accordance with U.S. practice and makes a number of minor format changes to claims 1-17. Additionally, applicants offer newly written claims 18-21 which are directed towards details of the preferred embodiments of the present application. Entry and consideration of these newly written claims is respectfully requested.

Having responded to all anticipated objections, applicants submit that claims 1-21 are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. In the event the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of these claims, he or she is respectfully requested to contact applicants' undersigned representative.

FEI

Serial No. 09/401,730



Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley C. Spooner", written over a horizontal line.

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SCS:kmm

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